REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9 and 10 were rejected for obviousness over U.S. Patent No. 5,970,475 issued to Barnes ("Barnes") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,418,416 issued to Rosenberg, et al. ("Rosenberg"). Also in the Action, claims 3 and 8 were rejected for obviousness over Barnes in view of Rosenberg, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,023,683 issued to Johnson, et al. ("Johnson"). These rejections are traversed.

The present invention discloses an intranet based electronic stockroom and catalog (ESAC). The system includes an ESAC program that operates on a secure company intranet and access is via one or more local company terminals. The intranet ESAC manages on-site inventory information and also manages catalog information from outside vendors. By merging on-site information with outside vendor information the system is able to provide search capabilities that allow for simultaneous searching of the multiple vendor catalogs and items that are available on-site. Integrating on-site and off-site information, ESAC also provides budgeting and accounting functions, including individual spending limits. The present ESAC system also allows the outside vendors to download their catalogs directly to the ESAC server, both for initial loading of their catalogs and for updating their catalogs.

Claim 6, for example, recites "a system of storing, searching and purchasing a wide variety of items from an intranet based electronic stockroom and catalog (ESAC). The system comprises "an ESAC program that is executed on a server that operates on a secure company intranet, wherein the ESAC is accessed by authorized employees at one or more company terminals, and on-site inventory information and multiple vendor catalog information that is stored in ESAC wherein, the vendors are allowed to download their catalog information to ESAC, both for initial loading of their catalog and for updating of their catalog information." The system also includes "search capabilities that allow for simultaneous searching of the multiple vendor catalogs and items that are available on-site" and "integration of ESAC files with other company electronic files s that budgeting, accounting and authorization limitations are

implemented with each purchase and tracking of purchases is possible."

Barnes teaches a system that allows authorized users to interact directly with suppliers rather than having to go through centralized purchasing agents. See col. 6, lines 9-12. The system of Barnes is an Internet based system that requires three servers: a supplier processor server; a supplier catalog server; and, a customer server. See abstract. The two supplier's servers are positioned at the supplier's location, the customer server is positioned at the customer's location, and the servers use the Internet to communicate. See col. 3, lines 58-61. The system of Barnes allows customers, at one location, to access the catalog server, at the vendor's location, via the Internet. Purchase information received by the catalog server is forwarded to the processor server where a purchase order is generated. See col. 3, lines 45-61.

Barnes fails to disclose "an intranet based electronic stockroom and catalog (ESAC).... that is executed on a server that operates on a secure company intranet, wherein the ESAC is accessed.... at one or more company terminals, and" the ESAC stores "on-site inventory information and multiple vendor catalog information." Barnes further does not disclose a system "wherein, the vendors are allowed to download their catalog information to ESAC, both for initial loading of their catalog and for updating of their catalog information." Barnes also does not disclose simultaneously "searching of the multiple vendor catalogs and items that are available on-site" and "integration of ESAC files with other company electronic files so that budgeting, accounting and authorization limitations are implemented with each purchase and tracking of purchases is possible", as is recited in claim 6.

On page 2 of the Action, it is asserted that Barnes teaches allowing multiple vendors to download their catalog information to the ESAC for initial loading of their catalogs or updating of their catalogs. Figure 2-4 and 14 are cited to support this assertion. What Figure 2 actually illustrates is the physical separation of the customer server 34, which is accessed by a customer, and the catalog server 42, which stores the catalog information. What Figure 3 actually illustrates are the major components located at the buyer's location and the major components located at the seller's location. See col. 4, lines 41-44. What Figure 4 actually illustrates are the

communication links between the major components of the system. See col. 4, lines 45-46. What Figure 14 actually illustrates are the steps for adding an authorized supplier to the system of Barnes. After a supplier is administratively added to the system, users may access the remotely located supplier's catalog and order items. See col. 23, lines 4-14.

Also on page 2 of the Action, it is asserted that Barnes teaches simultaneous searching of multiple vendor catalogs and items that are available on-site. However, on page 3 of the action, it is admitted that Barnes does not teach a system for storing on-site inventory information. As applicant has not found any teaching in Barnes to support storing and searching of on-site inventory, it is believed that the assertion on page 2 of the Action was made in error.

On page 3 of the Action, it is asserted that column 23, lines 53-59 of Barnes teaches permitting the vendors to download their catalog information via the Internet to the ESAC. What col. 23, lines 53-59 actually teaches is transferring item information from the supplier's legacy catalog 44' to the SQL supplier catalog server 98. Both catalog 44' and server 98 are located at the supplier's location, thus no information is downloaded and stored at the customer's location. See Figures 3 and 6B, and col. 23, lines 53-59.

Rosenberg teaches a distributed system for generating orders of stocked items when the items need to be re-ordered. See col. 1, lines 15-18. Multiple cabinets are distributed throughout the operating area and linked via a network. See col. 4, lines 28-36. Each cabinet comprises multiple drawers for holding and distributing the articles for sale, in a controlled manner. See col. 3, lines 56-61. Each cabinet drawer includes a pressure sensitive switch that indicates to a controller when the article within has been removed or restocked. See col. 4, lines 10-13. If a customer desires an article that is not in the inventory of the cabinets, the customer is directed to the e-commerce site of the vendor. See col. 6, lines 45-53.

Rosenberg fails to disclose "an intranet based electronic stockroom and catalog (ESAC).... that is executed on a server that operates on a secure company intranet, wherein the ESAC is accessed.... at one or more company terminals, and" the ESAC stores "on-site inventory information and multipl vendor catalog information." Rosenberg further does not disclose a

system "wherein, the vendors are allowed to download their catalog information to ESAC, both for initial loading of their catalog and for updating of their catalog information." Rosenberg also does not disclose simultaneously "searching of the multiple vendor catalogs and items that are available on-site" and "integration of ESAC files with other company electronic files so that budgeting, accounting and authorization limitations are implemented with each purchase and tracking of purchases is possible", as is recited in claim 6.

Johnson teaches a system that combines a catalog hosting site and an automated requisitioning system. See col. 2, lines 47-56. In the Johnson system, customers order items from a catalog and the system creates an "order list" that is sent to a requisition/purchasing system. See col. 2, line 64 to col. 3, line 2. Information regarding an ordered item is communicated back and forth between the requisition/purchasing system 40 and the catalog database 36, via interface 60. See col. 5, lines 28-38, and Figure 2.

Johnson fails to disclose "an intranet based electronic stockroom and catalog (ESAC).... that is executed on a server that operates on a secure company intranet, wherein the ESAC is accessed.... at one or more company terminals, and" the ESAC stores "on-site inventory information and multiple vendor catalog information." Johnson further does not disclose a system "wherein, the vendors are allowed to download their catalog information to ESAC, both for initial loading of their catalog and for updating of their catalog information." Johnson also does not disclose simultaneously "searching of the multiple vendor catalogs and items that are available on-site" and "integration of ESAC files with other company electronic files so that budgeting, accounting and authorization limitations are implemented with each purchase and tracking of purchases is possible", as recited in claim 6.

The teachings of Rosenberg and Johnson do not make up for the deficiencies of Barnes. None of the patents teach storing both on-site inventory information and catalog information from multiple vendors on one server that is accessed via a company intranet. Further, none of the above patents teach permitting vendors to download their catalog information to the company's server, which advantageously places the burden of updating the catalogs on the vendors. The

combination of Barnes, Rosenberg and Johnson due not teach the present invention as recited in claim 6. For all of the above reasons, claim 6 is considered allowable over any combination of Barnes, Rosenberg and Johnson. Claims 7-10 depend from claim 6 and are considered allowable for at least the same reasons. Claim 1 recites similar features as claim 6 and is considered allowable for at least the same reasons. Claims 2-5 depend from claim 1 and are considered allowable for at least the same reasons.

All claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, and a Notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If any questions remain, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
The Jackson Patent Group

By: _____

Auzville Jackson, Jr.
Registration No. 17,306

8652 Rio Grande Rd.
Richmond, VA 23229
(804) 740-6828

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